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 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
 INFORMATION REPORT

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 Comments of George Laskaris on Proposed Merger.
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1. In addition to the negotiations which SK-ELD is promoting for its amalgamation with the Independent Socialist Group (ASO), that organization has also energetically continued its negotiations for the creation of the "Democratic Front"; these have, at least so far, met with complete failure.
2. The most recent information is that Pepes Argyropoulos was persuaded by SK-ELD to organize the "Democratic Front" on the basis of the PAK (Political Reconstruction Movement). The founders of PAK visited General Nicholas Plastiras, and Argyropoulos explained at great length the creation of the "Democratic Front". Plastiras disagreed with the idea of cooperating with SK-ELD, and of covering up for Alexandros Svolos and Elias Tsirimokos, since he felt that no good would result for Greece by so doing. Stratigopoulos and Sakellariopoulos immediately sided with him. The proposal of Argyropoulos was rejected, and the effort of SK-ELD thus came to naught.
3. A representation from SK-ELD has been officially invited to the next COMISCO convention at The Hague; Svolos, Tsirimokos and probably George Someritis or Grigorogiannis will be representatives. It is reported that the Greek Government will approve the issuance of passports to these representatives.
4. George Laskaris (ASO - Independent Socialist Group), is reported to have made the following statements in connection with the proposed unification:
 - a. The COMISCO has been exerting pressure upon ASO members to combine with SK-ELD; in the successive meetings and discussions of the ASO, and after COMISCO had recommended such merger, Laskaris said that he had categorically stated his refusal to accept such a solution, and that if the unification should finally be decided upon, he would withdraw from every political movement, giving up the fight he had been waging for thirty years. Laskaris added that it was impossible for anyone to cooperate with Svolos, much less with Tsirimokos.
 - b. The last convention of SK-ELD indicated that nobody in that party disagreed with the policy of Tsirimokos since, with 73 members present, 73 voted for Tsirimokos and 72 for Svolos.

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- c. Consequently, although it has been said that Demetrios Stratis and N. Askoutsis disagreed with the personal political line followed by Tsirimokos, no one had officially severed connections. Laskaris said that he could not, therefore, understand the recommendation of COMISCO to unite with SK-ELD, "and share in all the sins committed by SK-ELD to date, as well as in all those that Tsirimokos will commit in the future".
- d. However, in order to avoid opposing the COMISCO, a committee was formed, composed of S. Papaioannou, Evangelopoulos and Kalogeropoulos; this committee has already begun negotiations. Laskaris said that it had been proposed that he should take part, but he refused the invitation in view of his objections to the proposed merger, which would exist for at least as long as both Tsirimokos and Svolos were among the leaders. So far no basis for an agreement had been reached, and, in Laskaris' opinion, no agreement will be reached. The greatest cause for concern lay in the possibility that, in the event of failure to arrive at an agreement, COMISCO might officially recognize SK-ELD at its next convention, and the ASO would thus become completely ostracized from International Socialism.
- e. SK-ELD had originally proposed that a committee be formed, composed of Svolos, Tsirimokos, Askoutsis, Stratis, Papaioannou and Laskaris himself; the latter refused, stating that he would never agree to any such cooperation for as long as Tsirimokos retained the leadership. Laskaris eventually compromised, however, and accepted Svolos. Following this, discussions continued between Tsirimokos on the one hand (as representative of SK-ELD), and Papaioannou, Evangelopoulos and Kalogeropoulos on the other hand (as representatives of ASO).
- f. Laskaris added that, if it were a question of his becoming an instrument for the ambitions and aspirations of Tsirimokos, and of his serving in any way the aims and policies of EKE (to which he was completely opposed), he felt that it would be better for him to remain outside the fold.
- g. Laskaris also commented that the COMISCO had recommended that the PODN (Panhellenic Organization of Democratic Youth) unite with SK-ELD, but so far there have been no discussions regarding this merger.
- h. In conclusion, Laskaris regretted the fact that he was not financially able to attend the COMISCO convention in order to explain the situation, as he was convinced that he could change their decision. He commented that, even in Greece it was impossible to be politically active, since each had to be concerned with the problem of earning a living; he felt that, if the means were available, his organization could publish a newspaper, and easily organize its members to stand up against the SK-ELD. As it was, he felt that ASO would either have to yield, or go under.

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